

A Resolution to Resist the Immigration Enforcement Program Currently Being Implemented by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and to Support Efforts for a Humane Immigration System

Submitted by the Social Action Committee of the Maine Conference, UCC at the 2026 Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference.

THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING

The Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” ²⁷ He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” ²⁹ But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” ³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

The Good Samaritan is a familiar, popular, and compelling parable. What leads into it is a short conversation between Jesus and a lawyer. The lawyer wants to know about eternal life and Jesus basically confirms his belief that if you want eternal life then go near to your neighbor in a loving, caring way. The lawyer, though, wanted some clarification. He asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?”

Who is my neighbor? If he’s asking, then it must have been the case that some people *might* not have counted. So Jesus shared the parable of the Good Samaritan. After which Jesus asked, “Which do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” The answer was obvious and the lawyer got it right: he said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said, “Go and do likewise.”

In light of the ongoing travesty of apparent murder, suffering, and inhumanity perpetrated by ICE on people across the USA and in Maine, with people literally left lying and

bleeding in the streets, what can we do to help stop it and how fast can we get started? That's what people of good conscience and "Kindom of Heaven" values do when others are subjected to such dehumanization and violence.

We find the case for action compelling, rooted in stories from people, Churches, communities, and Associations of our own Maine Conference, United Church of Christ.

WHEREAS, in early January 2026 the calculated, prior-publicized "biggest ever ICE raid" coming to Minneapolis seemed like an advertised, targeted, political provocation. Two US citizens, Renee Good and Alex Pretti, were shot dead in the streets of Minneapolis by ICE agents for reasons that have yet to be demonstrated as justified, and there were no transparent, independent, impartial investigations of ICE agents' actions in the aftermath. Indeed, to this day the public knows nothing about these killings other than live videos showing two people shot to death – shockingly riddled with bullets at point blank range - for no apparent, justifiable reasons. Seemingly killed with impunity.

WHEREAS, on January 21, 2026, in what seemed like sarcasm and mockery of our Maine maritime and sportsman culture, the Department for Homeland Security (DHS) website said that the "U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) today announced the launch of "Operation Catch of the Day," an immigration enforcement effort across the state of Maine **targeting the worst of the worst criminal illegal aliens who have terrorized communities. The operation officially launched yesterday. Some of the arrests of the worst of the worst from the first day of operations include criminal illegal aliens charged and convicted of horrific crimes including aggravated assault, false imprisonment, and endangering the welfare of a child.**"

WHEREAS, relying on data from the Deportation Data Project compiled by researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles, and University of California, Berkeley, the Portland Press Herald reported in March of 2026 that "**of the 192 people arrested by immigration officials in Maine from Jan. 20 to 28, only 12 had criminal convictions, while another 27 have pending criminal charges.**" A June 2026 report by the Maine Immigration Right's Coalition concludes that, as compared to other ICE operations, "during operation Catch of the Day, people with no criminal contact at all rose from 41% to 80% - concentrating enforcement on people with no record rather than with criminal histories," and that "agents apprehended individuals during OCTD [Operation Catch of the Day] who were visible to immigration authorities – including those participating in legal immigration processes – in pursuit of high detention volume rather than individuals presenting a public safety risk." In a PBS interview on July 14, 2026, Maine's Senator Angus King said, "ICE agents are being given quotas from the White House of how many people to arrest a day. It was 3,500. Now I understand it's 2,000. That's an awful way to make this kind of policy, because you're going to get these kinds of terrible results. They ought to quit that."

87 *WHEREAS*, out of concern for their safety and the safety of the neighbors they write
88 about, circumstances created by ICE actions compel us to redact the statements below,
89 freely expressed for this resolution by people from every Association of the Maine
90 Conference.

91
92 *WHEREAS*, a person in the [REDACTED] Association writes, “My late husband’s daughter is
93 adopted from [REDACTED]. In her 40s now, she’s been in the US
94 since before age 2. She is dark. When ICE landed in [REDACTED] County over a month ago,
95 she was terrified. I have her immigration and naturalization papers in my safe. [REDACTED]
96 [REDACTED] All the paper trail for her identity. Thankfully, the [REDACTED]
97 Town Office does notary work for free for any [REDACTED] resident. They copied and
98 notarized those docs as copies of the true originals so that I could give them to [REDACTED]
99 [REDACTED] to keep on her person. I went to bed that evening reeling from the
100 surrealism of what I had just done. I am still blinking in disbelief as I type this. She has
101 been safe, so far. But I don’t put anything past this administration’s long arm of illegal
102 terror. I’m so relieved to read that [REDACTED] wants to fiercely protect its residents.”

103
104 *WHEREAS*, in the [REDACTED] Association, a church writes that “beginning in March
105 2025 the [REDACTED] Teams in our church [REDACTED]
106 [REDACTED], and some others unaffiliated with those teams became alarmed that ICE agents
107 could come to church and disrupt worship and threaten or remove our attendees from
108 [REDACTED] countries. We investigated via the ACLU and other groups what the protocol
109 could be. We have been unable to identify a private space that would definitely protect
110 our parishioners and friends but may use [REDACTED] should ICE Agents appear.
111 We have a team of fifteen parishioners ([REDACTED] team) who have a protocol that we
112 follow. We have a folder that designates the procedure and volunteers who sit outside or
113 just inside the door of the sanctuary when worship is going on. The ICE agents need to
114 have a judicial warrant and the names of the people they have identified (spelled
115 correctly). We also will notify the [REDACTED] Police Department if ICE Agents show up.
116 [REDACTED] police have asked to be notified and will come to the church; [REDACTED]
117 [REDACTED]. We have also identified parishioners who have a close relationship with
118 the [REDACTED] families who will take them to another room than the sanctuary and sit with
119 them while the ICE agents are on the church grounds. The church has signage that says
120 no arms are allowed on church grounds. The benefit of this ICE response protocol is that
121 it helps those on the [REDACTED] team manage our own anxiety and it is a demonstration
122 of our faith and desire to protect our neighbors, in this case the neighbors in our
123 sanctuary.”

124
125 *WHEREAS*, from within the [REDACTED] Association, we are told that “the [REDACTED]
126 community has experienced several actions by ICE and Border Patrol over the last several
127 months. These actions have been taken against farm workers on farms in [REDACTED]
128 [REDACTED]. None of those arrested have been charged with crimes; they are
129 here to work and have left violent situations in [REDACTED]. The first
130 taken in the fall of 2025 were two men living in [REDACTED] and working on a farm in

131 [REDACTED]. They also helped local residents with household maintenance projects and are
 132 hard workers sending money home to family members. When they were arrested a group
 133 of local people who knew them organized to support them in gaining their release. A
 134 [REDACTED] account was established and there was a generous outpouring of money that
 135 has been used to pay legal fees and assist with rent, transportation, and other needs. They
 136 were detained for several weeks during which time our local network helped connect
 137 them to legal services and their attorney is assisting with their asylum case. They have
 138 returned to their home in [REDACTED] and are back to work.

139
 140 “On December 1st a young family - father, mother and toddler - were picked up at the
 141 grocery store in [REDACTED] by ICE/BP and taken to [REDACTED] with no provisions for
 142 the toddler (diapers, blanket, clean clothes). The next day they were incarcerated in
 143 [REDACTED] at the ICE detention facility where the father was kept while the mother and
 144 child were released. The father was a farmworker and sole source of income so our
 145 volunteer group provided transportation, rent, food and many other support services to
 146 the family.

147
 148 “There are many more stories to tell about the immigrant families in our [REDACTED]
 149 community. Stories about their fear of going out to the store or to church or the park
 150 where they might be arrested. Stories about constantly watching for big, black SUV's with
 151 tinted windows and fearing a knock on the door. And yet these neighbors continue to
 152 work every day on our local farms. Our volunteer group now meets monthly at the [REDACTED]
 153 [REDACTED] Congregational Church to discuss upcoming needs for these families including
 154 transportation to detention hearings in Chelmsford, Massachusetts and Scarborough, ME,
 155 appointments at consulates in Boston and medical appointments locally. Our lives have
 156 been enriched by these relationships, and we are grateful for the opportunity to stand in
 157 support with our immigrant neighbors.”

158
 159 WHEREAS, a church in the [REDACTED] Association which serves the community
 160 through offering free hygiene and cleaning supplies noticed a decrease in immigrant
 161 families, mostly Middle Eastern, utilizing their services around the time of the surge. The
 162 church's response was to prepare the volunteers to call the hotline to report incidents if
 163 ICE arrived and to distribute "red cards" listing legal rights in both English and Arabic.

164
 165 *WHEREAS*, a person from the [REDACTED] Association writes that “the jobsite I was managing
 166 was affected by Border Patrol 3 times. The crews made up of migrant workers were
 167 grabbed either on their way to the jobsite or at the rentals where they were staying. Most
 168 were legal (waiting to be processed) but arrested anyway and kept in bad environments
 169 for several weeks leaving their families at home in [REDACTED] without income or a father during
 170 that period.”

171
 172 *WHEREAS*, a person from the [REDACTED] Association reports that “on a cold, winter
 173 afternoon, [REDACTED] was coming home from the grocery store with her husband. Her young

child was in school. ICE was waiting at her home and took her without giving her husband any information. Family members could not find out where she was for 48 hours. She was taken based on an offense that was previously cleared from her record. [REDACTED], who has lived here legally for many years, was retained out-of-state for several weeks in an office that was not set up for overnight detention. She was denied her daily medications and had no blanket or pillow. She had to use her coat as a covering at night. She suffered emotional abuse from the officers. [REDACTED] was on the list to be moved fifteen hundred miles away. Finally, she was let go with no notice to family, left on the street in the middle of the night. Luckily, a Good Samaritan helped her find a ride for the long trip home. In the aftermath of this "Catch of the Day", [REDACTED] family has had to take time off from work and borrow money in order to pay the lawyers who are still working on her case. The damage to her and her family may take years (if ever) to overcome."

WHEREAS, on July 13, 2026, in Biddeford, Maine, an ICE agent shot to death 25-year old Johan Guerrero – a legal immigrant to the US – mistaking him as someone else for whom ICE had a warrant. Unequipped with body cameras despite DHS assurances that ICE agents would begin wearing them, a bystander's video shows a white car slowly going around in circles at an intersection, agents running alongside to stop it because Johan was shot multiple times in the head and no longer in control. They pulled him out of the car where he lay in blood on the street, his body visible to onlookers, including his wife and 3-year old daughter. In the hours following, the DHS, declining to name the ICE agent who shot the man, simply said that he was "fearing for public safety." No evidence was provided to warrant this fear nor any account of what actually happened.

WHEREAS, in the twenty-hours following the Biddeford shooting, people from the public to civic and religious leaders to Maine politicians to law enforcement to legal authorities have demanded that "ICE must not be allowed to investigate itself or control the public narrative surrounding a death in which its personnel or operations were involved," to quote the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition. That kind of covert control and manipulation of investigations into public shootings of people by federal agents is a violation of the principles of our government and the rights of people who are our neighbors.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the delegates to this 2026 Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ, that we are opposed to the federal immigration enforcement program as it is currently being carried out by ICE.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we encourage church members, congregations and their clergy, and our Associations; and authorize the Conference Minister, Board of Directors, and entities of the Maine Conference to:

- Organize, promote, and engage in meaningful non-violent demonstrations and

- 217 resistance to ICE actions in Associations across the Maine Conference;
- 218 • Contact congressional delegations and strongly urge them to work for a new, fair,
- 219 functional, and humane immigration system;
- 220 • Testify when possible to legislation that will support a new, fair, functional, and
- 221 humane immigration system;
- 222 • Consider supporting candidates and officials who share the goals and values of this
- 223 resolution;
- 224 • Support and collaborate with local organizations offering services to immigrants;
- 225 • Encourage the Social Action Committee or other social action oriented organizations
- 226 to conduct workshops and share information on immigration;
- 227 • Publicly condemn the use of lethal force or any form of violence;
- 228 • Protect and demand due process;
- 229 • Demand transparency;
- 230 • And, in the spirit of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, go and do likewise such other
- 231 things that will lead to ensuring that our immigrant neighbors are loved, free from
- 232 fear, harassment, and discrimination, safe and protected in their homes, workplaces,
- 233 and public spaces and are assured of their inherent dignity, worth, and equal rights.